

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A battery separator comprising at least one fibrous layer comprising a mixture of glass fibers and polymeric fibers and at least one support layer, wherein said support layer is formed of an acid-resistant material and comprises a plurality of macroscopic openings having diameters larger than ~~[[50μm]]~~ 1 mm and penetrating the whole thickness of said support layer providing direct ionic transfer through said support layer via straight paths extending substantially perpendicular to the extended plane of said support layer.
2. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the fibrous layer has an average pore size of 3 to 15 μm .
3. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the fibrous layers essentially consist of glass fibers.
4. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 3, wherein the fibrous layers comprise 20 to 40 % by weight of glass microfibers having an average diameter of less than 1 μm and 60 to 80 % by weight of coarse glass fibers having an average diameter of about 3 μm.
5. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the fibrous layers essentially consist of polymeric fibers.
6. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 5, wherein the fibrous layers comprise polymeric fibers having a diameter of 0.1 to 10 μm.
7. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 6, wherein at least 10% by weight of the polymeric fibers of the fibrous layers have diameters of less than 1 μm and at least 60% by

weight of the polymeric fibers have diameters of less than 5 μm .

8. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 7, wherein at least 15% by weight of the polymeric fibers have diameters of less than 1 μm .

9. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 8, wherein the fibrous layers comprise 20 to 40% by weight of polymeric microfibers having an average diameter of less than 1 μm .

10. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 6, wherein the polymeric fibers have diameters ranging from 0.1 to 5 μm .

11. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 5, wherein the polymeric fibers are polyolefin fibers.

12. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 11, wherein the polyolefin is polyethylene and/or polypropylene.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently amended) A battery separator according to claim 13 1, wherein the fibrous layers comprise glass fibers having a diameter of 0.1 to 10 μm .

15. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 14, wherein the glass fibers have diameters ranging from 0.1 to 5 μm .

16. (Previously presented) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the fibrous layers comprise polymeric fibers having a diameter of 0.1 to 10 μm .

17. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 16, wherein the polymeric fibers have diameters ranging from 0.1 to 5 μm .

18. (Previously presented) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the polymeric fibers are polyolefin fibers.

19. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 18, wherein the polyolefin is polyethylene

and/or polypropylene.

20. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the fibrous layer has a thickness of 0.2 mm to 3.6 mm.

21. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the openings of the support layer cover more than 60% of the surface of the support layer.

22. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 21, wherein the openings of the support layer cover more than 70% of the surface of the support layer.

23. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 22, wherein the openings of the support layer cover more than 80% of the surface of the support layer.

24. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 23, wherein the openings of the support layer cover more than 90% of the surface of the support layer.

25. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the openings are spaced apart 0.01 to 5 mm.

26. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the support layer basically consists of a filled or unfilled polymer.

27. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 26, wherein the polymer is a thermoplastic polymer.

28. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 26, wherein the polymer is a polyolefin.

29. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 28, wherein the polyolefin has a molecular weight of at least 600,000, a standard load melt index of substantially 0, and a viscosity number of not less than 600 ml/g.

30. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 28, wherein the polyolefin is polyethylene.

31. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 26, wherein the support layer is a microporous polymer layer with an average pore size of less than 1 μm .
32. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 31, wherein more than 50% of the micropores of the microporous polymer layer are 0.5 μm or less in diameter.
33. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein at least two opposing edge regions of the support layer are not covered by the fibrous layer to provide edges for sealing.
34. (Cancelled)
35. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the openings of the support layer have the form of slots or long holes.
36. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the support layer basically consists of a glass fiber fabric.
37. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the support layer basically consists of a polymer fiber fabric.
38. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the support layer basically consists of a polymer fiber fleece layer.
39. (Withdrawn) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the support layer basically consists of a fleece layer containing polymer fibers and glass fibers.
40. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the support layer has a thickness of 0.01 to 1 mm.
41. (Original) A battery separator according to claim 1, wherein the separator has the form of a pocket with an open top, a closed bottom and closed sides.
42. (Withdrawn) A valve-regulated lead-acid battery comprising at least two oppositely charged

electrodes in a closed case, a body of an electrolyte and a separator between adjacent ones of said electrodes, wherein said separator is a separator according to claim 1.

43. (Cancelled)

44. (Cancelled)